

**Badlands National Park
Air Tour Management Plan
Planning and NEPA Scoping Document**

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Part 1 - Introduction to the Project

A. Introduction

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS), has initiated the development of an Air Tour Management Plan (ATMP) for Badlands National Park pursuant to the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-181) and its implementing regulations contained in Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 136, *National Parks Air Tour Management*. The objective of the ATMP is to develop acceptable and effective measures to mitigate or prevent the significant adverse impacts, if any, of commercial air tour operations upon the natural and cultural resources, visitor experiences, and tribal lands of Badlands National Park.

A commercial air tour operation is defined as a flight conducted for compensation or hire in a powered aircraft where a purpose of the flight is sightseeing over a national park, within ½ mile outside the boundary of any national park or over tribal lands, during which the aircraft flies below a minimum altitude of 5,000 feet (except for the purposes of takeoff or landing, or as necessary for the safe operation of the aircraft), or less than 1 mile laterally from any geographic feature within the park unless more than ½ mile outside the boundary. A commercial air tour operator is any person who conducts a commercial air tour operation.

In accordance with the National Parks Air Tour Management Act, the Badlands National Park ATMP: may prohibit commercial air tour operations in whole or in part; may establish conditions for the conduct of commercial air tour operations; shall apply to all commercial air tour operations within ½ mile outside the boundary of the National Park; shall include incentives for the adoption of quiet aircraft technology; and shall provide for the initial allocation of opportunities to conduct commercial air tour operations if the plan limits the number of such operations. The need for implementation of any of these measures must be justified and documented in the ATMP and within the finding of no significant impact/record of decision.

B. Air Tour Management Plan (ATMP) Development Process

The process is initiated in a particular location following the receipt of an application for air tour operating authority from an existing or new entrant commercial air tour operator. The FAA has received applications for commercial air tour operating authority from one existing operator and one new entrant for Badlands National Park. The ATMP planning and environmental assessment process is summarized in Figure 1. The scoping process has been initiated early in ATMP planning to ensure an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to commercial air tour operations over and within ½ mile of the national park. Following completion of the planning and environmental process, appropriate implementation actions will be taken for the selected ATMP alternative. This may include federal rulemaking (see Figure 1).

In developing the ATMP and any associated rulemaking actions, the FAA is required to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National Environmental Policy Act), and its implementing regulations contained in 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508 (hereafter referred to as “the regulations”). The regulations mandate that the FAA and NPS shall, to the fullest extent possible, interpret and administer the policies, regulations and public laws of the United States in accordance the policies set forth in the National Environmental Policy Act and these regulations (1500.2(a)). The regulations also mandate that the FAA and NPS shall, to the fullest extent possible, use the National Environmental Policy Act process to identify and assess the reasonable alternatives to proposed actions that will avoid or minimize adverse effects of these actions upon the quality of the human environment and use all practical means, consistent with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and other essential considerations of national policy, to restore and enhance the quality of the human environment and avoid or minimize any possible adverse effects of their actions upon the quality of the human environment (1500.2(e) and 1500.2(f)). For the purposes of complying with sections 1501.3 and 1501.5 through 1501.8 of CEQ regulations, the FAA is the lead agency and the NPS is a cooperating agency.

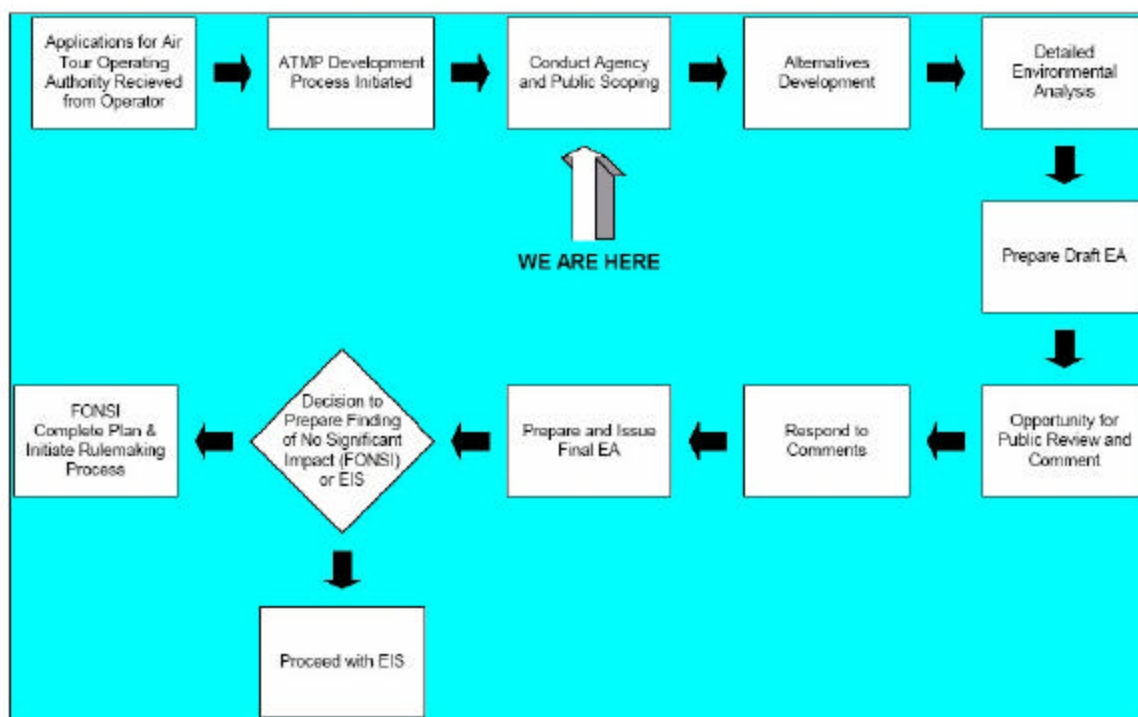


Figure 1 - ATMP Planning and Environmental Assessment Process

The FAA will, in cooperation with the National Park Service, prepare an environmental assessment (EA) in accordance with FAA Order 1050.1D. The FAA may decide to proceed with the development of an environmental impact statement (EIS) at anytime during the development of the environmental assessment. This notwithstanding, following the planned development of the environmental assessment, either a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) or environmental impact statement will be prepared. Prior to implementation of the ATMP and following any federal rulemaking actions, a record of decision will be prepared.

Additional information on the ATMP Program is available on the FAA's ATMP Website located at www.atmp.faa.gov. Interested parties may request information regarding the development of this and other ATMPs through this website.

Part 2 – Setting

A. Introduction

The discussion below summarily describes the setting for the Badlands National Park ATMP project. A description of the park's natural and cultural resources, visitor experiences, tribal lands, and commercial air tour activity are provided to assist the public and agencies in the preparation of meaningful comments. The most useful comments are those that address the scope of analysis, present significant issues, and suggest reasonable alternatives to the proposed action with the greatest specificity possible.

The planning area for the Badlands National Park ATMP project is depicted on Figure 2. The area encompasses the Badlands National Park and the area within ½ mile outside the boundary of the park. The National Parks Air Tour Management Act limits the applicability of the Air Tour Management Plan to operations conducted within this area. Although the scope of authority is limited, the FAA recognizes its responsibility under applicable environmental laws to consider impacts on potentially affected resources located in the vicinity of the Badlands National Park but in excess of a ½ mile outside the boundary of the park.

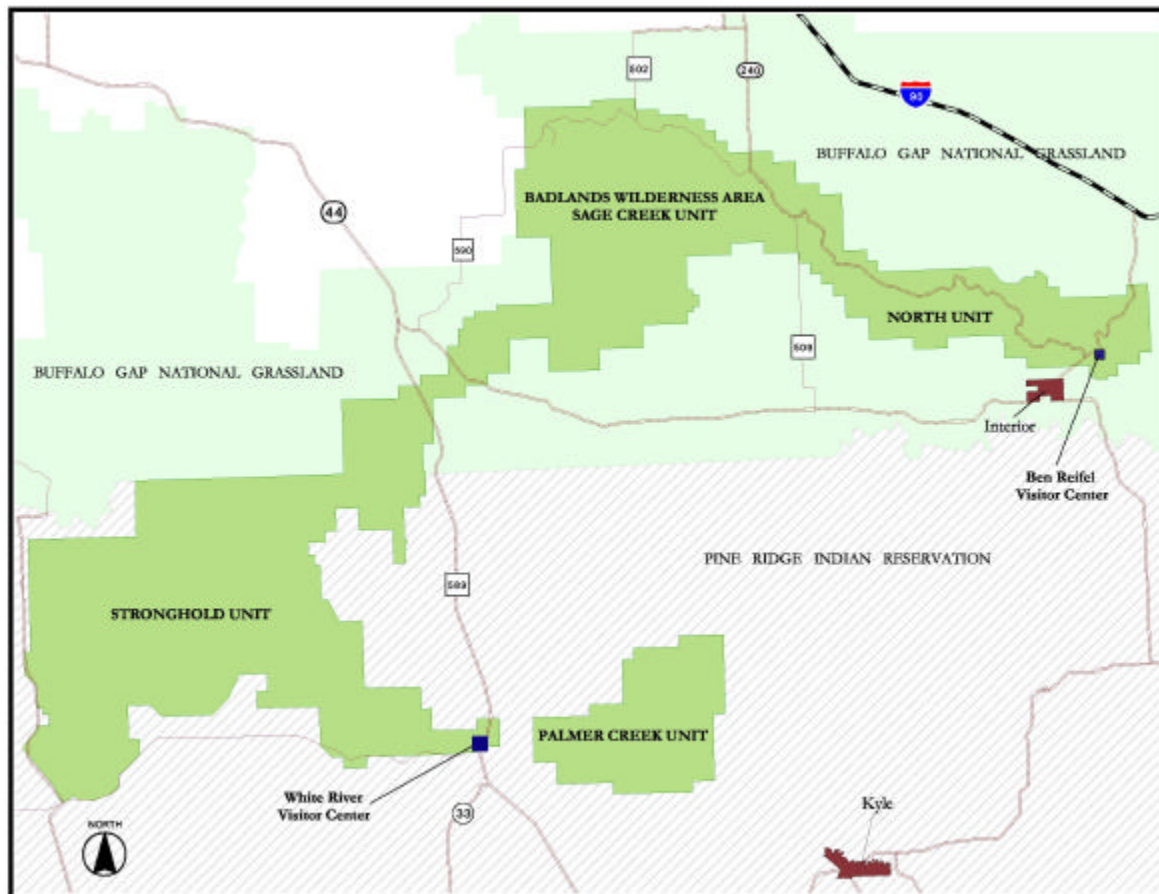


Figure 2 – Badlands National Park Planning Area

B. Badlands National Park - Natural and Cultural Resources, Visitor Experience, and Tribal Lands

Badlands National Park is located in the White River or Big Badlands area of southwestern South Dakota. Steep slopes, numerous small valleys, and sparse vegetation characterize the area. The park is approximately 244,000 acres, of which 64,000 is designated as wilderness. In 1929, Badlands National Monument was authorized “to preserve the scenic and scientific values of a portion of the White River Badlands and to make them accessible for public enjoyment and inspiration.” Badlands National Monument was formally established by Presidential Proclamation on January 25, 1939. The Monument was redesignated Badlands National Park by the National Parks and Recreation Act of November 10, 1978. Other purposes defined for the park include preserving the area for science and the massive vertebrate fossil beds and other paleontological, zoological, and geological resources for the public.

The overall context for park purposes and values (including resources) is defined in NPS Management Policies 2001 (1.4.6):

- The park’s scenery, natural and historic objects, and wildlife, and the processes and conditions that sustain them, including, to the extent present in the park: the ecological, biological, and physical processes that created the park and continue to act upon it; scenic features, natural visibility, both in daytime and at night; natural landscapes; natural soundscapes and smells; water and air resources; soils; geological resources; paleontological resources; archeological resources; cultural landscapes; ethnographic resources; historic and prehistoric sites, structures, and objects; museum collections; and native plants and animals;
- Opportunities to experience enjoyment of the above resources, to the extent that can be done without impairing any of them;

- The park's role in contributing to the national dignity, the high public value and integrity, and the superlative environmental quality of the national park system, and the benefit and inspiration provide to the American people by the national park system; and
- Any additional attributes encompassed by the specific values and purposes for which it was established.

Badlands National Park purposes and values generally include all the above, since all exist or may be attributed to the park to some degree – as established under the NPS Organic Act. Descriptions of attributes, and supplementary information about them, are provided in the Draft General Management Plan (2003) for the park. Values of the park are implicit in the statements of purpose, but they are expressed specifically in the park mission statement.

Purposes

- Protect the unique landforms and scenery of the White River Badlands for the benefit, education and inspiration of the public.
- Preserve, interpret, and provide for scientific research on the paleontological and geological resources of the White River Badlands.
- Preserve the flora, fauna and natural processes of the mixed grass prairie ecosystem.
- Preserve the Badlands wilderness area and associated wilderness values.
- Interpret the history of the Sioux National and Lakota people.

Values

- A blend of the best known Oligocene fossil deposits contained within the archetypal Big Badlands formations.
- A rich and varied cultural history spanning from paleo-Indian occupation through the early 20th century homesteading period.
- A fine expanse of mixed grass prairie ecosystem.
- Badlands wilderness character that includes clean air, quiet, solitude, vastness, and natural processes.
- A setting for people to explore and appreciate, through such activities as hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, scenic drives and vistas, research, educational opportunities, and quiet contemplation.

The park boundary was established along jurisdictional lines rather than geographic features and is administratively divided into two units. The North Unit is owned by the federal government in fee simple and, like most of the early “traditional” parks, the National Park Service has sole management authority. The South Unit is located on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and is “trust” land, intended to be managed cooperatively by the National Park Service and Oglala Sioux Tribe. The park is further segmented administratively. It is open to grazing in accordance with tribal / Bureau of Indian Affairs regulations.

Badlands National Park is characterized by barren canyons, peaks, and ridges intermixed with large areas of mixed-grass prairie providing habitat for large numbers of wildlife and plant species. The rugged topography and variegated rocks produce spectacular visual effects. Over time, the retreat of the White River banks has resulted in a unique landscape characterized by barren badlands, including an erosional structure called a “wall.” The park is considered to represent potential range and habitat for all species indigenous to semiarid mixed prairie grassland ecosystems. Badlands mixed grass prairie vegetation is characteristically diverse and found throughout the park.

The cultural and historic resources of Badlands National Park include archaeological sites, historic structures and features, ethnographic resources, and potential cultural landscapes. Paleontological resources were a major reason for establishing Badlands as a national monument, and later a national park. The region contains the largest known assembly of late Eocene and Oligocene mammal fossils in North America. Fossils from the area have provided valuable information for understanding mammalian evolution and diversity. Of the discovered fossils, most are of animals that are now extinct or different from present-day species. The vertebrate fossils preserved within the White River Badlands have been studied extensively since 1846 and can be found in museum collections throughout the world. Small percentages of the Badlands National Park have been surveyed for fossil resources. The park contains

evidence of continued use by the Oglala Sioux Tribe for traditional religious activities, particularly in the South Unit. There are several areas within the park that contain spiritual significance to the tribe.

Badlands National Park received approximately 906,000 visitors in 2002. There are approximately 730 acres of visitor services, residential, and administrative facilities. The park offers a wide range of recreational opportunities, including auto-touring with scenic overlooks, wildlife viewing, hiking, picnicking, and camping, as well as a number of interpretive and educational programs. The park is a destination for members of the scientific community who come to view, study, and research the paleontological and geologic resources. The park is also a destination for an increasing number of backpackers and outdoor recreationalists.

The number one activity of park visitors is to view the scenery. Visitors can experience the scenery along the Badlands Loop Road or Sage Creek Rim Road in the North Unit. The Badlands Loop Road is a 28-mile road that skirts the edge of the North Unit. Along Badlands Loop Road are 14 designated overlooks for travelers to view the scenery. One of the most popular overlooks is the Pinnacles Overlook, offering views of spires and canyons. Other visitors experience the scenery by exploring one of the hiking trails in the Cedar Pass area or by backpacking or horseback riding through the more remote areas of the park. The park also has eight day-hiking trails all located in the Cedar Pass area of the North Unit.

Most visitors drive through the park, stopping infrequently for short walks on park trails and overlooks. Fewer visitors hike longer distances over the maintained trail system. Information, history, and exhibits are located at the park's two visitor centers. The Ben Reifel Visitor Center is located in the Cedar Pass area of the North Unit. This visitor center offers visitor information and has exhibits on fossils, cultural history, and prairie ecology that familiarize visitors with some of the main features of the park. In the South Unit, the White River Visitor Center is located in the southeast corner of the Stronghold area, over 50 miles south of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center. This small visitor center includes park orientation and information, an exhibit area and park information. Cedar Pass Campground near the Ben Reifel Visitor Center and Sage Creek Campground off of Sage Creek Rim Road are the park's only campgrounds.

Within Badlands National Park is the Badlands Wilderness Area, the largest prairie wilderness in the United States, consisting of over 64,000 acres. Sage Creek Rim Road skirts the northern boundary of the Wilderness Area. There are no established trails, limited hiking/backpacking use, and no roads within the Wilderness Area. The area consists of the sharply eroded badland formations and an endless mixed grass prairie. Trees are scarce and there are limited areas of low lying shrubs. Most use in the wilderness is by horseback, and generally confined to day trips originating from the Sage Creek Campground, located on the northwest edge of the wilderness.

C. Commercial Air Tour Activity and Visitor Experience

There is currently one existing operator who provides commercial air tours over and within ½ mile outside the boundary of the Badlands National Park. Approximately 4,099 commercial air tour operations are authorized per year. This figure is based on the operator's application for air tour operating authority submitted pursuant to Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 136. In the application, the operator was required to report the greater of the number of commercial air tour operations conducted during the twelve-month period preceding April 5, 2000, or the average number of commercial air tour operations conducted by the operator during the three-year period preceding April 5, 2000. In accordance with the National Parks Air Tour Management Act and Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 136, the annual air tour operations over and within ½ mile outside the boundary of the Badlands National Park are currently capped at the number of operations reported in the operator's application, unless otherwise authorized by the FAA and NPS, or until the ATMP is implemented.

All existing commercial air tour operations at Badlands National Park are certificated by the FAA in accordance with the requirements of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 91 and 135. The FAA has proposed national safety standards to govern commercial air tours (Docket No. FAA-1988-4521; Notice No. 03-10) (See Federal Register 60572, October 22, 2003)

The FAA Rapid City Flight Standards District Office has developed an Air Tour Operation Plan regarding the conduct of air tour operations over and within the vicinity of Badlands National Park. This plan

identifies standard operating procedures and a safety plan for each operator. The approved air tour routes are presented in Figure 3a and Figure 3b. Compliance with these procedures is voluntary and occasionally, air tour operations are conducted in a different manner. The procedures in the FAA Rapid City Flight Standards District Office Air Tour Operation Plan are not currently enforceable as federal law or regulation.

Those who experience the National Park solely by means of a commercial air tour are considered legitimate visitors to the park although their experience of the park resources and values is quite different in most cases from that of the ground based visitor. The air tour visitor experience often varies depending on weather conditions and the desires of the air tour client/visitor (i.e. length of flight, geographic features of special interest). The experience described below is based on an air tour operation conducted in clear weather conditions and in accordance with the FAA Rapid City Flight Standards District Office Air Tour Operation Plan.

Most of the commercial air tour operations originate from and return to the helipad located just outside the northeast entrance of Badlands National Park. The flight tracks are concentrated in the eastern portion of the North Unit of the park. The air tour flight tracks take visitors over the Cedar Pass area of the North Unit, looping south of the northeast entrance over the hiking trails and the Ben Reifel Visitor Center. One track takes visitors west over the Fossil Exhibit Trail, generally flying north of the Badlands Loop Road. The air tour visitor is provided an opportunity for viewing the contrasting buttes and steep walled gullies and canyons which comprise the badland walls, badland basins, and plateaus. In addition, the air tour visitor can view extensive prairie grasslands, scenic vistas, and occasional wildlife.

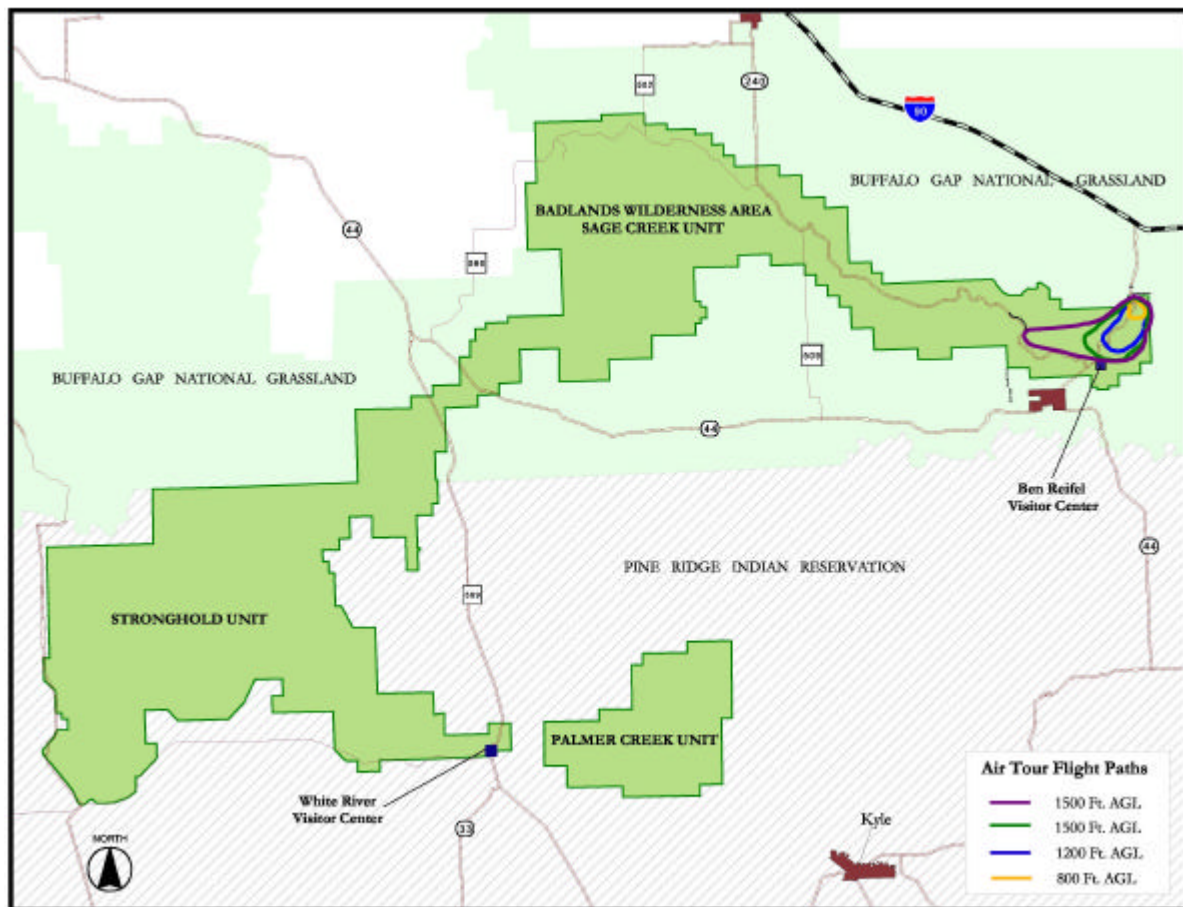


Figure 3a – Approximate Routes Identified in FAA Rapid City Flight Standards Office Air Tour Operation Plan (Vicinity View)

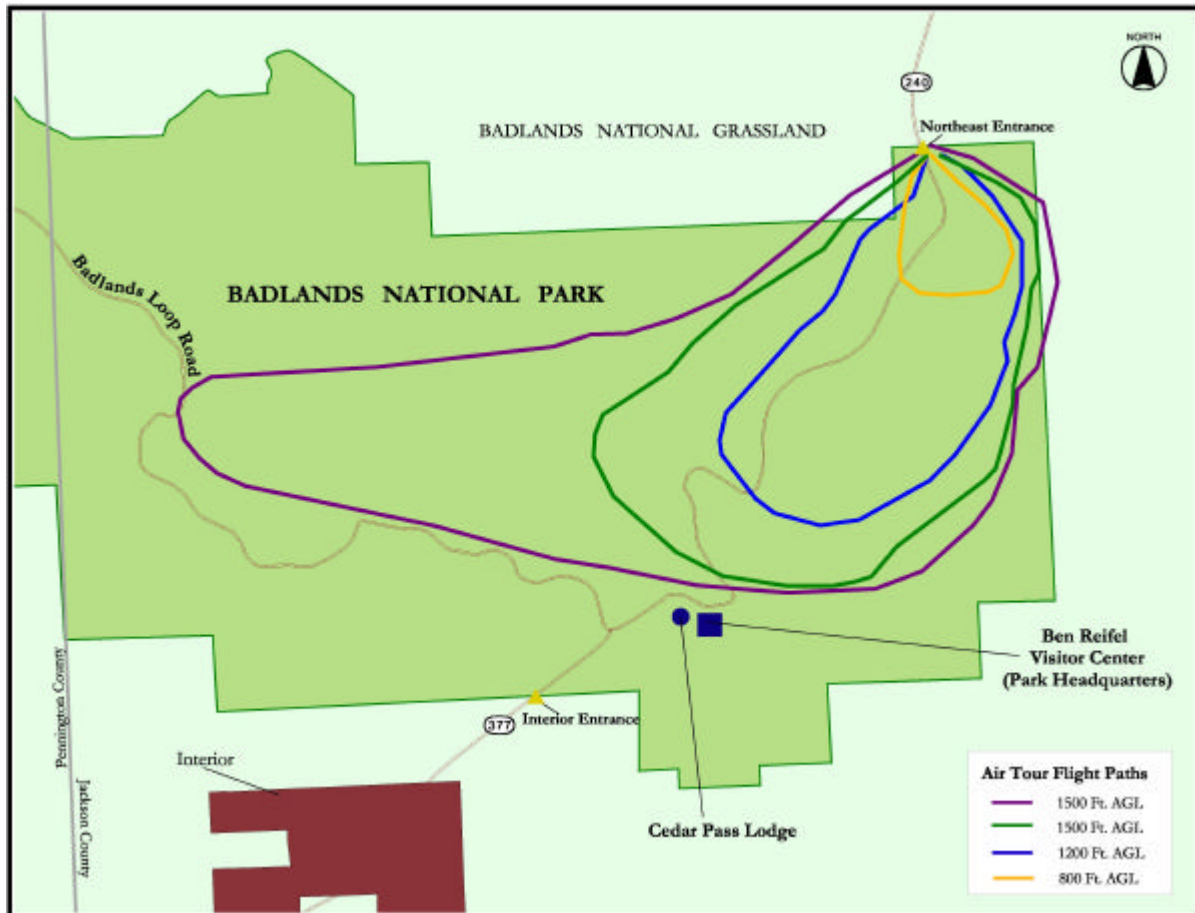


Figure 3b – Approximate Routes Identified in FAA Rapid City Flight Standards Office Air Tour Operation Plan (Close-up View)

Part 3 - Federal Action and Range of Alternatives

A. Federal Action

The federal action associated with this project is the establishment of an Air Tour Management Plan (ATMP) for Badlands National Park, which accomplishes the objective set forth in the Air Tour Management Act of 2000, which is to establish acceptable and effective measures to mitigate or prevent the significant adverse impacts, if any, of commercial air tour operations upon the natural and cultural resources, and visitor experiences. The purpose and need for this project stem from the enactment of the Air Tour Management Act of 2000, wherein the U.S. Congress directed the FAA, in cooperation with the NPS, to establish an ATMP for any national park or tribal lands for which such a plan is not in effect whenever a person applies for authority to conduct a commercial air tour operation over the park. Two persons have applied to the FAA for operating authority to conduct commercial air tour operations over Badlands National Park, which triggers the need to develop an ATMP at this park. Following completion of the ATMP planning and environmental process, appropriate implementation actions will be taken for the selected ATMP alternative. This may include federal rulemaking. The FAA, in cooperation with the NPS, is actively preparing to make a decision on one or more alternative means of meeting the Air Tour Management Plan objective while also complying with the existing legislative, regulatory, and, to the greatest extent possible, the policy mandates of both agencies.

In Section 802 of the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000, Congress found, in relevant part, that (1) the Federal Aviation Administration has sole authority to control airspace over the United States; (2) the Federal Aviation Administration has the authority to preserve, protect, and enhance the environment

by minimizing, mitigating, or preventing the adverse effects of aircraft overflights on public and tribal lands; and, (3) the National Park Service has the responsibility of conserving the scenery and natural and historic objects and wildlife in national parks and of providing for the enjoyment of the national parks in ways that leave the national parks unimpaired for future generations. The relevant FAA legislative, regulatory, and policy mandates are primarily defined by the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 (49 U.S.C. 40103(b)), the Air Tour Management Act of 2000 (49 U.S.C. 40128), and the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C. 303(c)). The relevant NPS legislative, regulatory, and policy mandates are primarily defined by the Organic Act of 1916 (16 USC 1, 2-4), the General Authorities Act of 1976 (16 USC 1a-1 through 1a-8), the Redwoods Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-250, 92 Stat. 163, 16 USC 1a-1), and the enabling legislation specific to Badlands National Park. The determination of significant adverse impacts, if any, for this ATMP will be made by the FAA, in cooperation with the NPS, based on the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 as well as the aforementioned legislative, regulatory, and policy mandates of the FAA and the NPS, other pertinent environmental laws, and the purposes and values of Badlands National Park (described in Part 2B of this document).

The Air Tour Management Act of 2000 specifies that the ATMP be developed by means of a public process. This scoping process is one of the early elements of that public process. As a result, a specific “preferred alternative” for the ATMP has not yet been identified. No determination has yet been made on the justification or need for any limitations or restrictions on commercial air tour operations over and in the vicinity of Badlands National Park with the exception of those specified in existing federal regulations. The FAA and NPS preferred ATMP alternative will be identified following scoping and following the conduct of a complete environmental analysis. The FAA and NPS may identify a preferred alternative in the draft environmental assessment, which will be made available for public review and comment.

B. Range of Alternatives

1. No Action Alternative

The environmental impacts of the no action alternative must be considered for comparative purposes in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the implementing regulation of the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40, CFR Parts 1500-1508). This is required even in situations such as this where the FAA and NPS are under legislative command to develop an ATMP. The “no action” alternative assumes the continuation of the present course of action can be expected if an ATMP is not developed for Badlands National Park. For this reason, under the no action alternative it will be assumed that the FAA Rapid City Flight Standards District Office Air Tour Operation Plan would remain in effect. It is important to note that the FAA Rapid City Flight Standards District Office Air Tour Operation Plan only applies to commercial air tour operations conducted in rotor wing aircraft, therefore, any commercial air tour operations conducted in fixed wing aircraft are not subject to the agreement. It is also important to note that compliance with the FAA Rapid City Flight Standards District Office Air Tour Operation Plan is voluntary on the part of the signatory operators and, under this alternative, the level of compliance would remain steady. Under this alternative, the FAA and the NPS would continue to have no federal regulatory authority to enforce the procedures specified in the FAA Rapid City Flight Standards District Office Air Tour Operation Plan. In addition, the existing caps on the number of commercial air tour operations and the limitations on new entrants imposed under Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 136 will also be assumed to continue in effect under this no action alternative. The no action alternative will be more fully described and will be carried forward for detailed analysis in the environmental assessment.

2. No Prohibitions, Conditions, Restrictions, or Limitations Alternative

An ATMP alternative that assumes no prohibitions, conditions, restrictions or limitations on commercial air tour operations will be analyzed. The Air Tour Management Act requires any prohibition, condition, restriction, or limitation on commercial air tour operations to be justified. Under this alternative, there would be no caps, limitations, restrictions, or federally specified routes for commercial air tour operations over the park other than those specified in existing federal safety regulations.

3. Other Alternatives

The FAA, in cooperation with the NPS, will determine if any mitigation measures are justified and develop other alternatives that will incorporate such mitigation measures as deemed appropriate.

If mitigation measures are justified, a range of potential mitigation measures will be screened for possible use at Badlands National Park. Table 1 provides a list of potential mitigation measures, which may be utilized either individually or in combination. The Air Tour Management Act specifically authorizes the use of these measures when their use is justified and the need is documented. Additional mitigation measures and alternatives might be suggested by the NPS, as a cooperating agency, and by the public or by other agencies. Such alternatives could be carried through analysis in response to specific issues about the effects of commercial air tour operations on park resources and visitor experiences. Consideration of the impacts of such alternatives may also provide a basis or justification for mitigation.

Table 1 - Potential Mitigation Measures

POTENTIAL MITIGATION MEASURES – PROHIBITIONS and CONDITIONS	
❖	In-whole prohibition on commercial air tour operations
❖	In-part prohibition on commercial air tour operations
❖	Establishment of commercial air tour routes
❖	Establishment of maximum and/or minimum commercial air tour altitudes
❖	Time-of-day restrictions for commercial air tour operations (including curfews)
❖	Restrictions on commercial air tour operations for particular events
❖	Maximum number of commercial air tour flights per unit of time (capacity limits)
❖	Conditions necessary for mitigation of intrusions on privacy on tribal lands
❖	Other prohibitions or conditions necessary for mitigation of noise, visual, or other impacts

Alternatives that are not practicable or otherwise do not satisfy the purpose and need for the project would not be carried forward for detailed analysis within the environmental assessment. A reasonable number of alternatives and the no action alternative will be carried forward for detailed analysis. A discussion of each of the initial alternatives not carried forward and the reasons for it not being carried forward will be included in the environmental assessment. The public will have an opportunity to view the alternatives analysis when the draft environmental assessment is distributed for public review and comment.

C. Provisions Common to All Alternatives

As required by the Air Tour Management Act, any ATMP alternative that establishes commercial air tour routes, minimum or maximum altitudes, caps, or curfews shall also include incentives for the adoption of quiet aircraft technology. This requirement will be satisfied for any alternative for which it is applicable. The incentives may include:

- Preferred routes (if any routes are proposed)
- Preferred altitudes (if any maximum or minimum altitudes are proposed)
- Partial or total relief from caps (if any caps are imposed)
- Partial or total relief from curfews (if any curfews are imposed)
- Other appropriate incentives

Part 4 - Initial List of Environmental Issues

A. Introduction

For the purposes of preparing environmental documents under the National Environmental Policy Act, the FAA is the lead agency and the NPS is a cooperating agency. The FAA and NPS have executed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding implementation of the Air Tour Management Act and development of ATMPs. The agencies have agreed, among other things, that the development of ATMPs and associated environmental document(s) under National Environmental Policy Act will be a fully cooperative process recognizing and complying, to the greatest extent possible consistent with the FAA's responsibility as lead agency, with the existing legislative, regulatory, and policy mandates of both agencies. The Air Tour Management Act specifically requires that "...the Administrator and the Director shall each sign the environmental decision document required by section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332) which may include a finding of no significant impact,

an environmental assessment, or an environmental impact statement, and the record of decision for the air tour management plan.”

FAA Order 1050.1D, *Policies and Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts*, sets forth specific environmental analysis procedures to be used in preparing environmental assessments and environmental impact statements. A copy of the order is available via the FAA’s Website at www.aee.faa.gov/e3/1050pt1d. In accordance with this order, the impacts (including cumulative impacts) of existing commercial air tour operations and any ATMP alternatives carried forward for detailed study will be evaluated in each of the 18 environmental impact categories listed below.

B. Environmental Impact Categories

1. Impacts on air quality (including potential visibility impairment)
2. Impacts on cultural resources
3. Impacts on coastal resources
4. Light emissions and visual impacts
5. Compatible land use impacts
6. Impacts on use of (consumable) natural resources and energy supply
7. Construction impacts
8. Noise impacts
9. Impacts on properties protected under 49 U.S.C. 303 (DOT Act 4(f))
10. Secondary (induced) impacts
11. Impacts on farmland
12. Socioeconomic impacts (including environmental justice)
13. Impacts on fish, wildlife, and plants (including threatened and endangered species)
14. Impacts on water quality
15. Impacts on floodplains and floodways
16. Impacts on wetlands
17. Impacts of hazardous materials and solid waste
18. Impacts on wild and scenic rivers

C. Initial Issues

One objective of this scoping process is to assist the FAA in determining the scope and the significant issues to be analyzed in depth in the environmental assessment. As a result the FAA may identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not relevant thereby narrowing the discussion of these issues in the environmental assessment. At this early stage in the planning process, the FAA and NPS are considering the following environmental issues to be particularly important:

- Potential noise impacts
- Potential impacts on visitor experience
- Potential impacts on Native American culture

The FAA is now inviting the public, agencies, tribes, and other interested parties to provide comments, suggestions, and input regarding the scope, issues, and concerns regarding commercial air tours and their potential impacts to be addressed in the environmental process and related to the development of the ATMP for Badlands National Park.

Part 5 - Sources Consulted.

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